

When you ask children what they want to be when they grow up, their answers vary from day to day. Some want to be the president, others want to be astronauts, but most children have this in common – they are curious about what the future holds. I did not fully lose that childlike curiosity until my junior year of high school, when I finally realized teaching was the career I wanted to pursue.

Growing up, teaching was a part of my family; all my aunts were teachers, as well as my grandpa. They taught in Bosnia where teaching is seen as one of the best jobs. Knowing this, I wanted to make my family proud and be the third generation to teach, so of course I always had the inclination of becoming a teacher. As I grew older, I dreamed of many jobs, from a designer, to an architect, but none of them seemed right. As my sophomore year came to a close, my AP history teacher told the class about a program the school offered- Education Professions, which allowed students to learn the fundamentals of being a teacher, as well as teaching in a class. As soon as this opportunity arose, I signed up. Although teaching was still something I was unsure of, the class allowed me to get my feet wet with the idea of being an educator.

As my junior year began, we started learning about child development, lesson building and classroom expectations. I was intrigued by how much teachers do behind the classroom walls. Soon, we started our internship at Maryland Elementary. Wanting to be a high school teacher, I decided to work with a seventh grade science class. Within days my appreciation for teachers grew even greater. I would come home and tell my family how amazing it was working with the class. I could not believe that kids, who were only a few years younger than me looked up to me as a great adult figure. I became a role model. The feeling was heartfelt. In that moment I realized that teaching was something I could see myself pursuing.

Going into my senior year, I was sure of two things: 1.) I wanted to become a high school teacher and 2.) I wanted to take our Education Professions class again. This year, I was put into a fifth grade Read 180 classroom. Although seventh grade was awesome, the fifth graders I began to work with opened my eyes to the true magic of being a teacher. The children would greet me every day when I walked into class. They would willingly ask me questions, and always want to work in my group. Never in my life had I imagined to have such a powerful impact on

someone's life. The last event that reinforced the idea of teaching was the day before winter break. After passing out goodie bags and having the students give me hugs, I realized that I would have to be apart from them for eighteen days. I had become so used to seeing the class every day that I forgot that at one point, I would have to leave the class.

Children spend a great deal of time in school, and the adults around them impact their lives. I have not only learned this from the amazing teachers I have had, but I have seen it happen with the kids I work with. We, as future teachers, have the opportunity to change a child's life completely. School is the foundation to success in life. Teaching may not be the best paying job, but it is the most rewarding. No amount of money can buy a smile on a fifth grader's face when he finally advances to the next reading level or a seventh grader's joy when she aces her science project. Teachers are not just there to teach the curriculum; they teach life lessons, and I cannot wait to change the lives of students like my teachers have for me. Many people say teaching is a selfless job; I agree. One does not become a teacher to have millions of dollars in his or her bank account. Teachers are aware that their pay will not be high, but they become a teacher to have their students be successful and change the world.

In a few months, when I graduate, many of my friends will go to law school or medical school, and I know that I will follow my dreams of becoming a teacher. While my friends save lives, I will be the one that changes lives, and in my eyes, that is the best job anyone can have. Just like the curious child who changes their mind, my ideas will continue to change, but one thing will always stay the same: If you ask me what I want to be, I will proudly answer "a teacher."